THE

PIC NIC.

Cœnabis bene, mi Fabulle, apud me,
Paucis, si tibi Dî favent, diebus,
Si tecum attuleris bonam atque magnam
Cœnam. CATUL. Carm. xiii.

N° I. SATURDAY, JAN. 8, 1803.

THE Title of PIC NIC, given to this paper, is used in the sense applied to it by a neighbouring nation, signifying a repast supplied by contribution; and to this Miscellany all persons of genius and talent are invited to contribute.

Every publication, in the nature of a newspaper, or journal of politics and criticism, is generally viewed as the effusion of a party, or the produce of those antipathies, which long contention in the fields of ambition, or

disappointment in the pursuits of fame and fortune are apt to generate. The conductors of those prints which the public desire of early information renders fashionable, and perhaps necessary, are enlisted under the banners of some political party, devoted to some literary junto, prepared to impart praise or censure according to the dictates of prepossession or prejudice, or inclined to repeat malevolent insinuations or slanderous suggestions, without the least regard to honour or truth. Were it the intention of the Proprietors of the PIC NIC to increase the already exceſſive number of these publications, they would spare themselves the unnecessary labour of a previous appeal, and commit themselves to the sense of their readers, relying on the ordinary supports, and taking the ordinary means to insure them. But their hopes and intentions are widely different:—The PIC NIC does not present itself in the accustomed form of a newspaper, nor will such details be found in its pages as occupy the greater portion of the columns of those journals: no parliamentary debates, official dispatches from the Gazettes, or lists of promotions or bankruptcies, will be given; nor will interested speculations, or flattering recommendations called puffs, by any bribe, or any interest, procure a place in its pages.

Each number will contain, in the firſt place, a clear and succinct account of the political and historial events of the period elapsed since the last publication, and the general result of foreign transactions. In these narratives, and in the remarks to which they give rise, the welfare, pride, and glory of Britons will be invariably consulted:—those great objects are essentially dependent on the present happy constitution both in church and state; and to the support of that venerable establishment the constant exertions of this paper shall be directed. The delight and exultation which we feel in our own excellent political and social system can be cherished and displayed without wounding the feelings or alarming the pride of any other nation. With this explicit declaration, the Proprietors terminate their observations on their intended political conduct, and turn to those topics which more immediately gave birth to their undertaking.

A principal object in the promotion of this work is to expose the absurdities, the blunders, and what is worse, the wilful and envenomed falsehoods which daily appearing in the columns of papers issued in this metropolis, are circulated throughout the realm, and even the whole world. By influencing these publications, obscure, malignant, or interested

individuals possess the dangerous power of making false impressions on the public mind, exposing exalted characters to obloquy, and the superior classes of society to contempt and detestation. From these fictions the legends of sedition are supplied; and those who could not, from fact or observation, find a theme for their rancour, repeat with exaggeration the daily calumnies with which they are furnished from perverted report or malignant invention.

The present work will at least endeavour to check the baleful practice, become but too general, of wounding the peace and diminishing the respectability of illustrious families, by criminating their innocent pursuits, exaggerating the foibles of individuals, and gratifying, by falsehoods, the eagerness which the public has been taught to feel for scandalous anecdotes and sarcastic invective. The poison may continue to be instilled, but its antidote will be at hand, as the pages of the PIC NIC will ever be open to appeals against misrepresentation, and the Proprietors will make it their duty to rescue personal character from unmerited obliquy, by speaking the language of candour and of truth.

Influenced by no motives of interest, their intelligence will have the merit of being pure and unbiassed—its pride will be to deserve by consistency the approbation of its support-

ers; and its boast never to inflict a pang on the feeling heart, or light up a blush on the modest cheek by keenness of satire, or indelicacy of observation. If a laugh is indulged, or attempted to be called forth, against public invaders of customary manners, and admitted rules of action, it will be void of spleen, and used more as a corrective than a scourge.

The character of a nation is ever estimated in some degree by the taste displayed in its public amusements; and in reviewing these, the Proprietors will exercise a firm and cautious judgment. Refusing all play-house bribes, their criticisms on the drama, and all that appertains to its department, shall be unchecked by any mean or slavish controul; they will feel no more delicacy in appreciating the merits of a proprietor than those of an author or performer—all are equally servants of the public, open to remark, and amenable to reproof. Candour will teach them to raise and foster depressed and unassuming merit, while justice and every manly principle will concur in chastising arrogance, repressing presumption, and throwing down from their stilts those whom the ready and constant plaudits of venal adulators have raised to an undue eminence. Nor will their animadversions be confined to the British Theatre—the Opera, the subordinate places of amusement, the

public exhibitions, all those various displays of taste and genius, which the honourable pursuit of fortune, or the generous emulation of talent lays open in the public eye, will be analysed with care and candour.

To these views and objects will be added frequent notices of the transactions, amusements, and projects of the world; occasional strictures on those publications which engage attention; commemorations of illustrious personages who pass off the stage of life; moral and interesting essays; and original poetry.

Having thus amply detailed their intentions and motives, the Proprietors desist from the irksome task of making professions. It is not possible to determine the exact periods of publication; it will certainly appear every Saturday, but perhaps sometimes more frequently; this circumstance will depend on the state of public curiosity, and the demands made on the exertions of the Proprietors; for as profit has had no share in influencing the undertaking, so will the exertions to support it be dependent only on the probabilities of honest fame, and the prospects of real utility.

POLITICS.

In the present state of political affairs, there is little scope for narrative, but an abundant field for reflection. We have lived to behold a period, when one single power, by its arms or its influence, gives law to the whole civilized world, and when, speaking of the views and probable conduct of nations, nominally independent, we are obliged to ask, not what will the Emperor, the King, or the Senate decree; but what will France sanction or direct?

From this disgraceful ascendancy Great-Britain is alone exempt: throughout the rest of Europe, there is no power sufficiently hardy to raise the voice of independence, or exert the energy of men, wishing and deserving to be free. The ambition of France knows no satiety; wealth and poverty, peace and hostility, proximity and distance of situation, all ties and connexions are slightly considered by her, when opposed as obstacles to the gratification of her views. Italy, Flanders, and many subordinate States, are under her immediate dominion; Holland, Spain, Prussia, and Switzerland are under her direct controul;

Germany is rendered neutral, impotent, and infignificant by her artifices, more than by her arms; and Ruſſia and the other northern courts are infected by her politics, deluded by her speculations, or deprived of energy by her intrigues or her bribes.

Europe does not bound the torrent of her ambition: the continent of America is threatened with convulſion, in consequence of her poſſeſſing Louiſiana and Florida; the islands of the West Indies must look with dread on her undivided and undisturbed poſſeſſion of St. Domingo; and the dominion of the Mediterranean, so anxiously sought, and so jealously maintained by France, combined with the utter disregard of all moral ties which has long distinguished the political conduct of that nation, must create anxiety and alarm for the probable fate of all those domains and interests which can be affected by such an influence, vested in such hands.

With such a country, after a long and prosperous though expensive war, Great-Britain has made a peace which has been termed a peace of experiment. In the very formation of this compact, experienced statesmen and profound political observers perceived serious grounds for apprehension and dismay. The frank, the generous, the profuse cessions, made by Great-Britain, produced from France

nothing but chicane, duplicity, and arrogance. The joy felt by the people on the tidings of an event so grateful to their wishes, was damped by the consideration of these circumstances, too strongly presented, and too irrefragably supported, for contradiction or evasion. Yet the treaties were signed, and Great-Britain, having assented to a peace which was acknowledged to be dangerous, and only tolerable as a counter-experiment to war, evinced, by the alacrity of her compliance with the terms of her engagements, and her facility and even condescension, in accommodating herself to the views and prejudices of her late adversary, the sincerity of her desire to render peace permanent.

France, on the contrary, has maintained a lofty state, a port and mien of defiance, an hostility of language, and an unwearied, incessant exertion of influence, to impair the interests, diminish the respectability, and cripple the commerce of a country, she at once envies, dreads, and hates. Conscious that Great-Britain alone forms a barrier against her universal sway, France uses every art which arbitrary power, an enormously extended influence, and an enslaved press can afford, in calumniating the conduct of the British government, which gratitude or even common sense would teach her so highly to extol.

We disdain either by illiberal reflection or wanton scurrility to wound the sensibility or excite the irascibility of any nation, but when our own country is notoriously, falsely, and flagrantly attacked, no consideration towards a foreign offending power can justly be advanced as a reason for silence. A late incident so forcibly appeals to the feelings of independent and loyal men, that to speak less plainly would be treason against every manly and virtuous principle which ought to warm the bosoms of Englishmen.

The passing week has brought intelligence of the Consular decision on the fate of Switzerland. That illustrious and once happy country, whose boast it was to be inhabited by *un peuple simple, bienfaisant, brave, ennemi du faste, ami du travail, ne cherchant point d'esclaves, et ne voulant point de maitres*, is now doomed to renounce all the habits which had conferred on it felicity and glory, and to receive from a foreign state, with implicit submission, arbitrary dictates as to its future form of government, its domestic regulations, and external connexions. Nor is injury sufficient unless embittered by insult; the privation of liberty and political existence is accompanied with cutting reflections on the local position, the variety of governments, the diversity of religions, lan-

guages, and manners, and the distinctions of rank, which those brave men have hitherto cherished as sources of happiness, and barriers of independence. The people of Switzerland, who never aspired at conquest or riches, are reproached with their inability to maintain armies, from their poverty; they, whom a native integrity and simplicity prevented from casting a glance beyond the precincts of their own country, are admonished that changes in the circumjacent states require from them an accommodating system of alterations; and a virtuous people, content with poverty and independence, are roughly told that "FRANCE and the *Italian Republic* (the distinction is worthy of notice, as connected with the rumour that France will soon cease to bear the name of Republic) will never permit in Switzerland *any establishment which might prove of advantage to their enemies.*"

The haughty tyranny of the last restriction exceeds whatever has been recorded of the most severe system of colonial oppression, or the closest rigour of domestic bondage. Even France, in its present state, must tolerate *some establishments which may prove of advantage to its enemies.*

The expressions above quoted, are taken from a letter written by the first Consul of

France to the deputies of the eighteen cantons of the Helvetic republic; but, in a speech which he made to the Helvetic Consulta at Paris, on the 12th of December, he added to the same sentiments others more particularly aimed at Great-Britain, and at once offensive, illiberal, and unjust. "No English emissaries," he said, "are to be entertained in Switzerland. With England the Swiss are to have no relation." This exclusion, and the insinuation on which it is founded, are perfectly consonant with the system of injuring Great-Britain, which the writers and adherents of France have uniformly adopted since the conclusion of peace; but this is the first direct, explicit avowal of it which has proceeded from the head of the government, and therefore deserves to be retained in the memory of every Englishman.

A petty war has long been maintained between the editors of English and French newspapers, though on very unequal terms. The French language is current all over Europe, and the abuse against Great-Britain circulates with unimpeded facility; the English language is understood by few, and always liable to be weakened by want of fidelity in the translation. France has given to her government the uncontrouled power of suppressing at pleasure any publication,

foreign or domeſtic; England reſtrains no individual in his right of publishing his own sentiments or those of others, but is content with making every one reſponſible for that which he details to the public. France is clamorous and hasty in complaint, but cold and snail-slow in redress or justice. England has commenced a prosecution against a French royaliſt, whose zeal, perseverance, and talents entitle him to respect, for a libel on the present rulers of France; whilst a band of English and Irish traitors and desperadoes are encouraged, and even pensioned by the French government, to fabricate daily falsehoods, and gross, clumsy calumnies against the government, the social system, the laws and constitution of Great-Britain; as well as against every individual endeared to his country by his talents, his services, or his virtues.

In this despicable war we are far from desiring to take an active part, nor should we have condescended to notice it, had not the publication of the address to the Swiss Consulta been followed, in the journal called the MONITEUR, which claims exclusively an official character, by an invective replete with falsehood, calumny, and misrepresentation, not only against those members of the British senate who opposed the peace, and with equal truth and sagacity displayed the implacability

and ambition of our late enemy, but against the ministry who made that peace, and whom it has been a momentary fashion to treat with the highest respect and consideration. The aspersions of the official libeller have been well answered in almost every English newspaper, but the alarm they have excited is not so easily appeased. Peace has been bought at a price so dear, the experiment has been made under so many hazards, that people are not content to renounce, on a sudden, that which has cost so much, or to forego an experiment, which, with such great difficulty they have been admitted to make.

For our own part, without laying claim to extraordinary penetration, or affecting the jargon of paradox, we acknowledge that the declaration to the Swiss Consulta, and the subsequent libel in the Moniteur, are high obligations conferred on Great-Britain. The subjects of the British Empire are men of reflection, and seem generally to perceive the unextinguishable rancour of France; no disguise can in future palliate the virulent hostility of such avowed attacks in the moment of profound peace, and in the absence of every well-founded cause of complaint. Should a new war become necessary, we trust we shall not, as was the case during the last, be pestered with ceaseless discussions on its

cause, and the possibilities of avoiding it; nor will the enemy find perpetual advocates among men, who, in their eagerness to prove this country in the wrong, will maintain that he was always in the right; that his treachery, violence, and injustice, are justifiable consequences of the wanton aggressions which he has been called upon to repel. But we have no apprehenſion that war is, for the present moment, intended: the view of the crafty foe of British prosperity seems to be that which was anticipated at the moment of making peace; a perpetual renewal of provocations, insults, and defiances, harassing the government of this country, irritating and alarming the people, and above all, making the continent regard us with inquietude and distrust, and by withdrawing their confidence, diminish our commercial resources, and depress our funds.

Nor is it improbable that Great-Britain will suffer by these acts and exertions. To treat this question at large, would exceed our limits; but without entering into a discussion, we can speak with boldness the language of hope and confidence. The great ascendency France has acquired over Europe has been less owing to the vigour of her arms than the success of her stratagems. Nations have been taught to complain of their governments, and

to invoke that treacherous aid, which, while promised it freedom, pillaged, insulted, and enslaved them; but Europe can never again be deceived. The mask of universal philanthropy has fallen off, the veil of abjuration of conquest has been rent to shreds, and the same violence of feature which appalled and excited to arms the whole continent in the days of Louis XIV. is now again exhibited, with an aggravating exultation in the effects of bad faith, havoc, rapine, and desolation.

The meed of all these horrors can never be completely secured, while Great-Britain presents to the world an example of unabated integrity, undiminished vigour, and unshaken independence. The foul-mouthed railings of French scribblers or English rebels, may divert the ennui of Parisian society, or afford conversation to those *free* men of the great and *free* Republic, who are utterly prohibited from publishing, and who are allowed to converse only on a very few topics: they may even create some sensation in those courts on the continent, which have retained the liberty of thinking for themselves, at the expence of permitting France to hold an undissembled influence in their cabinets; but their ultimate effect will not be produced, unless a party to support their sentiments can be formed in England. Now it fortunately happens, that,

at this time, an unexampled unanimity of opinion with reſpect to France, prevails throughout the realm. An exception may be made of a few gloomy malecontents, but they are too inſignificant both in number and talents, to influence the general ſtate of ſociety. In parliament the leaders of parties ſeem to have but one end in view, though they propoſe to purſue it by different means: no one affects to think France a cordial friend to this country; the utmoſt raſhness of extenuation proceeds no farther, than to call her rivalſhip merely commercial. All claſſes of ſociety concur in applauding the wiſdom and dignity diſplayed in the ſpeech from the throne, and in commending the prudent foreſight of the miniſter, in maintaining reſpectable military and naval eſtabliſhments.

The grandeur, the power, and the undiſguiſed rancour of France, occaſion ſolemn thought and profound ſpeculation, but unalloyed by fear, and unſhaken by diſmay. The great body of Britiſh ſubjects are ready to riſk their property, and their lives, for the preſervation of their freedom and independence. Really fond of peace, they are not prone to ſeize ſmall cauſes of hoſtility, but they look with prudent jealouſy on meaſures, the end of which they cannot divine, though they already perceive their aim.

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To a minister who unites with decided sentiments, a tranquil temper, an unimpeached candour, and the utmost suavity of manners, they are willing to give unlimited confidence: he is eminently fit for his situation in the present position of affairs, when it is of the utmost importance to avoid all appearances of aggression, or even of irritation. But should a more decided crisis arrive; should the reſtless ambition and inveterate malevolence of the French government render it necessary for Britons again to unfurl the flag of glory, they cannot forget or fail to call for aid on that great Statesman, who, assisted by virtuous and disinterested colleagues, preserved the British government and constitution from the attacks of insidious circumvention, and open violence; who animated the patriotism, inspired the confidence, and drew forth the resources of the country in a manner unexampled, and in times for which the history of the civilized world affords neither parallel nor precedent.

THE THEATRE.

Quid deceat, quid non, quo virtus, quo ferat error.
HOR.

The following letter, written from the country, has been communicated by a gentleman of

whose taste and judgment we have a very high opinion: we do not hesitate therefore, to present it to our readers:

——— ———, 1802.

My dear friend,

I thank you very much, for all your kind inquiries, and I answer them by informing you, that I reached my ancient mansion in perfect health, and with a degree of satisfaction, which I never before experienced. My journey to London was the result of compulsory business, after an absence of twenty years, when I found its manners and amusements so removed from my late and former habits, that the whole pleasure of my visit was confined to the sight of you and a few other friends, who continue their partiality to the *Pavé de Londres*.

The Theatre, which had been the principal amusement, and powerful instructor of my early life, had lost all the means of affording pleasure to me, or instruction to any one. I found the play-houses of Covent-garden and Drury-lane, extended to dimensions that set all good acting at defiance, and must necessarily operate as a prohibition to the performance of those dramas, which have hitherto been considered, not only as the boast of the British Theatre, but of the British Nation,

and the human intellect. They are, indeed, calculated for no other purpose, but to exhibit pageantry and sing-song; and they not only force the regular drama into a submission to pantomime, but oblige it to assume that fantastic character.—This is literally the fact; for when the audience cannot hear the play, it must consequently dwindle into a pantomime, where the dialogue, the sentiment, and the catastrophe, are represented by action alone.

The old theatre of Drury-lane, was built by Sir Christopher Wren, the greatest geometrical architect in this, or any other country, and was constructed upon the principle of hearing and seeing every thing, in every part of it. There an impressive whisper was heard—there the dialogue of comedy required no higher tone than the conversation of the drawing-room—there the actor or actress, who could represent nature, found no impediment;—and there it was that the stage was a mirror, which fairly reflected to the very body of the time, its form and pressure, and proved the clear, unwrinkled glass of every age.

Whoever remembers the acting of Mr. Garrick, cannot forget the power of his under-tones, the influence of his very whispers, and the necessity of them in all their varieties,

to form his perfect representations. You are not of an age to have known Mrs. Pritchard, and I congratulate you on a circumstance so favourable to the frequenters of the winter theatres. Not a word, or scarce a loud breathing of her's escaped you, whether she played Lady Macbeth, or Beatrice. Nor could you perceive the least artificial violence in Mrs. Cibber, in her unrivalled performance of the Fair Penitent. Nor in her admirable representation of the Widow Belmour, in the Way to keep him, was it necessary for her to employ higher tones, either in the dialogue or the song, than would have been required in a large room of her own house.

In the present theatres, Alpine nature may be represented, and stupendous art may be imitated; but the scenery of domestic action, or intellectual life, must fail in the display, and the stage becomes a vast Eidophusicon. The drawing-rooms are temples, and the temples are cathedrals, while the actors are puppets, dwindled down into Fantoccini, and the drama reduced to the dumb shew of a ballet. ——In a theatre of such dimensions, Garrick must have roared; Mrs. Pritchard must have ranted; and Mrs. Cibber must have screamed, in order to have been heard; while all the delicacy of acting, and the nice touches of

their art, must have been lost in distortion and declamation.

If this opinion should want confirmation, I have the best authority that the times which are passing by us can afford; for I have heard Mrs. Siddons, whom I once met in the country, lament, that she has been frequently checked, in the finer parts of her characters, from the unconscious appearance of the audience, which told her, in the inarticulate language of vacant stare, that she was not heard. I am rather surprised that it has not yet occurred to the managers, to furnish the fruit-women with an assortment of patent glasses and ear-trumpets, which might be let out for the evening, to enable the spectators to see, and the audience to hear the personages of the drama.

Hence it is, that our dramatic writers are so imperfectly represented as to lose all their effect. The little of Tragedy that appears, must be rant; and the Comedies which are brought forward, must be founded on grimace. The public are therefore habituated to look for the splendour of scenery, instead of fine acting; and to be satisfied with the buffoonery of farce, the tinkling of sing-song, and the gaudy fantastic nonsense of pantomime, instead of correct and instructive pictures of life and manners.

Thus a frivolous taste is introduced, which tends to enervate, and consequently corrupt the mind; and the peop'e are frequently seen rushing in crouds to be amused with the decorations of a piece, which, in itself, does not transcend the meridian of Bartholemew Fair. Nay, the decorations themselves are continually applauded. I was present when the first display of the tent-scene in Richard III. was followed by a thundering approbation, while the soliloquy and the exclamations, the starts, groans, and writhings of the crook-backed Usurper scarcely provoked a plaudit.

The conduct of the stage, and the character of the pieces to be exhibited are subjected by law to the controul of the Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's houshold; and there is every reason to believe, that the nobleman who enjoys that office exercises his power with the utmost propriety: but if his station qualifies him to prohibit the performance of a play, which is offensive to good morals, decorum, or loyalty; he may surely be supposed to possess the power of prohibiting the erection of theatres of such incommodious dimensions, that pieces written to inculcate such useful and important sentiments, cannot produce their salutary effect.

But after all, would it not be for the interest, as I am sure it would be for the honour of the proprietors of the two houses, to erect

a third of moderate dimensions, where the best plays might be acted on certain days, by a company selected from them both, for the gratification of those whose taste has not yet been vitiated by the exhibitions of the existing theatres? The wiser part of the town would then quit a fire-side to visit the one, while folly would still continue to conduct her crouds to the other.

But if this scheme should be impracticable, or the rival proprietors should not condescend, like the kings of Brentford, to smell at the same nosegay; they might surely contrive, by way of interlude to some of their pantomimes, to employ the same machinery, by which Olympus with all its divinities descends in the Burletta of Midas, to let down a smaller stage, in which some of the fine scenes of Shakspeare and the standard dramas might be represented.

You have, my friend, often heard me say, that I regretted nothing in the retirement which I had chosen, but my distance from the dramatic entertainments of the metropolis; but my last visit has entirely cured me of that dissatisfaction; as I have now discovered that I can occasionally see, in a market-town in my neighbourhood, the best plays in the English language performed with more judgment, and far superior effect, than in the London theatres. I remain, &c. C.

SONNET FROM CAMÖENS.

Apollo e as nove Musas.
Son. li. tom. 3 ed. 1783, Lisboa.

The God of song, and sister Muses nine
Attun'd their lyres to harmonize with mine,
In strains more sweet than e'er from planets sprung;
When thus the trembling chords I struck, and sung.
"May that bright day, that moment happy prove,
"When from thine eyes, I drank large draughts of love!
"Blest be those feelings, by no fears alloy'd,
"When perfect bliss my rapt'rous soul enjoy'd!"
So I; till LOVE, Ah! with malignant eye,
Beheld my joyous minutes rapid fly
Thus light, thus imperceptibly away,
And, cruel, turn'd to night so fair a day!
Ah me! if now there aught of hope remain,
'Tis, if 'twere possible! increase of pain.

OLD NICK.

TO A LADY,
WITH A FASHIONABLE CAP.

I know, Maria, you contemn
The friendly aid which art supplies,
Yet beauty *binds* scarce one in ten,
While taste inconstancy defies.

Let then that head so stor'd within,
Without be deck'd with fashion's growth,
And *sense* and *folly* both shall join,
To praise what owns a charm for both.

STANZAS TO POPE'S WEEPING WILLOW AT TWICKENHAM.

Written in 1792.

Weep, verdant willow, ever weep,
And spread thy pendent branches round :—
Oh may no gaudy flowret creep
Along the consecrated ground!
Thou art the Muses' fav'rite tree;—
They lov'd the bard who planted thee.

The wintry blast assails in vain :
The forked light'ning passes by
To stretch the oak upon the plain,
Whose tow'ring branches brav'd the sky :—
The Muses guard their fav'rite tree,
They lov'd the bard who planted thee.

And oft, 'tis said, at ev'ning hour,
To Fancy's eye bright forms appear,
To glide beneath the leafy bow'r,
While music steals on Fancy's ear :—
The Muses haunt their fav'rite tree ;
They lov'd the bard who planted thee.

But all the Muses' tender care
Cannot prolong the final date ;
Rude Time will strip thy branches bare,
And thou must feel the stroke of fate :—
E'en thou, the Muses' fav'rite tree,
Must fall like him who planted thee.*

But still the Muse will hover near—
And planted there by hands unseen,
Another willow will appear,
Of pensive form, upon the green ;
To grace the spot, when thou no more
Shalt over-arch the hallow'd shore. C.

* *The event, here foretold, has since happened, and the tree is no more.*

FASHIONABLE INTELLIGENCE.

If it be expected that under this head we should detail the daily transactions of the Nobility and Gentry—expose their passing actions—publish their private invitations and visits—nay, even set down their intentions and thoughts, as is now the custom in the daily papers—we shall disappoint all those readers who look for this complaisance at our hands.

In the first place, all intelligence of future proceedings, if genuine, must be obtained in a very blameable manner. Information must be derived from the unsuspicious converse of friends, or we must bribe servants to afford it. In one case we become pilferers, steering clear of the law's lash, but not so of that which our own reflections would inflict; in the other, we must submit to tamper with confidential agents for the secrets of their employers. For surely the disposal and arrangement of our own time and actions must always be considered as secret, unless voluntarily exposed to the remarks and observations of others.

We do not, however, mean to restrain ourselves from commenting on known public transactions, which, though taking place in a

private house, have been witnessed by hundreds; nor to banish from our pages those articles of fashionable life which have been announced as in embryo, and which may interest the curiosity of our subscribers both in town and country. We shall ever feel obliged to those who will enable us to give such intelligence with accuracy, and who will enliven it with poignant sallies, or fanciful ornaments, pledging ourselves never to wound the feelings of any individual. If any of our readers should be dissatisfied with our limited intentions on this head, and must have their appetites gorged with statements when the Duke of ——— went out of town, when his Duchess supped abroad, and how well they both looked at the Opera—when the Marquis of ——— drove his curricle, and Lord ——— bought a new horse—who dines at home, and what guests are invited, &c.—we must (however reluctantly) refer them to the daily retailers of this empty tittle-tattle, who are possessed of those sources of supply which we never can draw upon. They are versed in the arts of minute detail, and presumptuous amplification; by them every article of fashionable intelligence is retailed or manufactured, from a birth to a death, a marriage to a divorce, from a mere innendo of scandal to a wilful, positive falsehood.

If the omission of such frivolous small-talk should injure the sale of our paper, or sanction the triumphant tone which, in consequence of our acknowledged deficiency, may be assumed by the above-mentioned papers; still if our efforts are rewarded with honest fame, we will gladly renounce to the owners and conductors of those journals, their *dishonourable advantages.*

NEWSPAPERS.

We have repeatedly stated that it is not our intention to copy the style or follow the system of these daily vehicles of intelligence. Lest, however, this resolution should be attributed to envy or incapacity, we shall occasionally present to our readers some of the glowing passages, interesting pieces of information, and brilliant sallies of wit which decorate the columns of these journals, assigning each extract to its real proprietor. We are encouraged in this attempt, not less by the delight attending its execution, than by the cheering promise of a correspondent, who assures us, that if these choice extracts are considered by our readers as desirable models of composition, he can, at a reasonable

weekly expence, furnish us with a machine, exactly similar to those employed by our contemporaries, in the fabrication of these curiosties of literature.

WIT.

Mr. Pitt's disorder is a *flying gout*. When Garnerin was in England a GOUT *for flying* seemed to be the national malady.—*Morning Post, Jan.* 1.

Since Mr. Pitt did not succeed in *taking Paris*, he is going to try *to take a five-bar gate*.—*Morning Chronicle, Jan.* 1.

The Morning Post is become a Proto *type* as it has long been an *example* to the other prints.—*Post, Jan.* 3.

We are obliged to assume the character of annotators, and inform our readers, that "on the 1st day of January, 1803, the Morning Post was beautifully printed on a new TYPE, cast for the purpose," &c. &c. &c.

The report of GOLD *mines* said to have been found in one of the western counties, turns out to be merely IRONical.—*Post, Jan.* 3.

Well said, Prototype!

No wonder if the French surpass us in SHOES; they were always a SLIPPERY nation.—*Post, Jan.* 3.

The French *Crispins* boast that they excel us in the manufacture of *shoes*. This, indeed, proves that their emulation is brought to the *last* shift. They have been long eminent for having the advantage of the *heels*. The Dutch, Swiss, and Italians, say they make the worst *uppers* in the world: and an *Hibernian* correspondent thinks there is nothing very wonderful in their superiority

on this new *footing*, considering the pains they have taken to be well *leathered* in their late *Naval Commerce* with this country.—*Times, Jan.* 3.

It is false to say Hadfield does not use his *Bride-well!*—*British Press, Jan.* 6.

IMPORTANT INTELLIGENCE.—Mrs. Hodges drove her curricle down Bond-street, yesterday, in a style which attracted general attention. Mrs. Mendzies followed in a manner equally dashing, and which evinced no less expertness at the whip.—*Press, Jan.* 5.

For a paper exclusively devoted to the interests of literature, these two specimens are tolerable; it is also a little laughable, that this same *literary* paper should have assigned Murphy's comedy, The Way to keep him, to Cumberland. (See *Press, Jan.* 4.)

The Press, however, is not alone misinformed in points of dramatic history: witness the following paragraph from the Oracle, *Jan.* 4.—

It is *shrewdly* suspected that if Quin, the first time he played Cato, had pronounced it *Catto*, Lord Bolingbroke would not have sent for him into his box, and given him *fifty guineas*, which his Lordship did, in public approbation of the *play*, and of *that performer*.

This *shrewd* writer should have recollected, that *Booth*, and not *Quin*, was the first performer of Cato, and that to him Lord Bolingbroke paid the compliment. We beg pardon, however, for desiring the gentleman to *recollect*, as the burthen of memory might press too heavily on his wit, and prevent such an ex-

quisite flight as that which the readers of the Oracle were favoured with the next day.

A little warbler at Drury-lane Theatre sings so enchantingly, that she never *wearies*, though she is an acknowledged *Tyrer*.

Bravo, Oracle!

PIC NIC.—We shall present to our readers a collection of exquisite *morçeaux* on this subject, which will suffice to shew the manner in which our diurnal wits attempt to correct morals by satire.

The Chronicle began the year with the following witty remark:—

The *Tottenham-street company* do not seem at all remarkable for their quickness at entering into the meaning of their *author*.

Perhaps the point of this sarcasm might not have been discerned but for the friendly aid of the *Post*, which in three days afforded a complete illustration:—

The Tottenham-street company are blamed for not understanding the meaning of their author; surely there can be no doubt of their abilities in *fashionable levities* or *fatal follies*, *half an hour after supper*.—*Post. Jan.* 4.

The PIC NICS constantly boast that they are a *select society*; and to be sure it will be universally allowed that they are a something *beyond common*.—*Chronicle, Jan.* 3.

A writer in a morning paper thinks the PIC NICS will only make *fools* of themselves: it is well if they make nothing else, for *that* can cost them little trouble.—*Chronicle, Jan.* 4.

It is said that Mr. Andrews, and the great ſtakesman,* will rehearse their speeches and their epilogues to the *Pic Nics*, because people of their good breeding know better than to hiss or bray.—*Times, Jan.* 5.

* *Meaning statesman, if any thing.*

Mrs. Siddons is become a Pic Nic: she had lately a grand supper on that principle in Dublin, at which were present the Lord Lieutenant and his Lady, with upwards of a hundred fashionables. It would be well if Actresses, with or without professional merit, would consider the vast influence of private character, to which this *Pic Nic* was a very distinguished compliment.—*Oracle, Jan.* 5.

The ſelect few who read the Oracle, might, perhaps, understand this paragraph, if the writer would explain whether, by Pic Nic, he means a lady or a meal: whether Mrs. Siddons was cut up and devoured, or the appetites of the guests satisfied with the usual articles of a bill of fare?

But a truce with prose: let us see in what manner the Muse lashes the unfortunate delinquents of Tottenham-street:

UNDE DERIVATUR PIC NIC?

Philosophers in vain their brains *do* twist,
To find the derivation of *Pic Nic*,
And most of them, I think, the truth have mist,
Because their brains were dull, or skulls were thick.
The reason of the term is mighty plain;
When some of them are dead, who now are quick,
By fell disease, or feller BRIDGMAN, slain,
Then will be pretty *pickings* for *Old Nick*.

VIEW OF FRENCH LITERATURE.

We intend regularly to devote a few columns of this paper to a cursory review of such French publications as shall be deemed most congenial to the taste and habits of the major part of society in this country. Whatever French literature shall afford, relative to those arts, which constitute the charm of our existence; whatever we shall judge conducive to politeness, taste, that characteristic elegance of manners denominated *Bon Ton*, sentiment, decorum, morality, and domestic felicity, is to be considered as our peculiar province. We shall therefore principally attach ourselves to travels, history, poetry, novels, and dramatic pieces. This field is sufficicently beautiful and fertile to exempt us from the necessity of hurrying away our readers, and bewildering ourselves in regions too remote. We shall not then engage with the authors of the *Magazin Encyclopedique*, or with the critics of Strasbourg and Deux-Ponts, in tedious discussions on the true signification of an hellenism, or on the question whether an Egyptian zodiack, discovered but two days ago, was constructed before or after the deluge. We shall refer this contest to the

learned professors of Oxford and Cambridge, worthy representatives of British erudition. We shall, in like manner, leave to the Laplaces, the Foucroys, the Lagranges, the task of arguing with the members of the royal institution, on the laws of celestial mechanism, the solution of the most abstruse problems in mathematics, and the new discoveries in chymistry and galvanism.

During the two last centuries, the French have considered themselves the arbiters of taste, elegance, and the graces; even, at the present day, notwithstanding the dreadful political malady that has distorted and disfigured them, they maintain the same pretensions. They carry into the regions of literature the spirit of their revolutionary conquests, and though they retain only a few vestiges of their former literary opulence, as Delille, Laharpe, Boufflers, Choiseul-Gouffier, and Ségur, yet they habitually look on the literature of the rest of Europe with supreme disdain. England, especially, (although it might easily be demonstrated, that nearly all the best literary productions which France can boast in the last fourscore years, have been derived from thence) appears, for some time, to have been the perpetual object of their attacks. It is the fashion of the day in Paris, to aim at debasing the fame of British talents: the prac-

tice is encouraged by the highest political authorities; and we naturally expect at an early day, to learn that the rank of Counsellor of State has been conferred on the blockhead, who lately wrote in the Mercury that the English ladies had two left arms.*

We shall pay no attention to these impertinences of the metropolis of politeness. We smile with pity at these petty efforts of malignity, which resemble the abuse of children scolding their nurses. They will not deter us from doing complete justice to our rivals. We shall with pleasure point out such of their models, as can be deemed worthy of imitation, and frankly indicate those which ought to be avoided. A consciousness of our title to fame, will be the surest pledge for our impartiality; but this preliminary promise of justice to the French, is not to be understood as implying any sacrifice of the reputation of British writers of either sex. When Athens dictated laws of taste to all Greece, the schools of Rhodes were not less renowned than those of the Portico; and never did the Athenians conceive the barbarous idea of depreciating the islanders of the

* Our correspondent does not recollect, perhaps, that even this joke is pilfered from Dryden, who, in a satire on Tonson the bookseller, described him with two left legs.—See Malone's Dryden, vol. i. p. 527.

Mediterranean, and lopping them off from the great literary family of the west of Europe. It was in an island that the goddess of beauty placed her cradle, her altars, and her votaries. Whilst Cyprus and Cytherea resounded with the hymns of the bard of Samos, Sicily, the scene of happiness and fertility, spontaneously poured forth rural poetry. In short, we ought never to forget that from two islands, after an interval of nearly three thousand years, issued forth the most sublime strains of Epic poesy.

Yet the island which produced Milton, is now attacked in the most indecent manner, by a *M. Fiévée*, a continental author of some trifling revolutionary romances, sent last summer from the Temple to London, in the capacity of a spy, and afterwards pensioned to calumniate us. Fortunately on this occasion, we find in good French literature, an adequate reply to this literary abortion. We ask *Monsieur Fiévée* in the words of Piron;*

Hercule, expira-t-il sous l'effort du Pygmée?

M. L'Abbé Delille, who sought an asylum with us during the distractions of his country, composed at that period a complete translation of *Paradise Lost*, in French verse. This

* La Métromanie.

homage paid to our literature by one of the few distinguished writers existing in France, does equal honour to his heart and his understanding, and avenges us for the indecent attacks of the burlesque romancer whom we have just noticed. M. Delille has publicly read in Paris several passages from his translation, which have met with the greatest applause. The work is in the press, and will appear in two months, adorned with every typographical embellishment. Voltaire formerly cautioned those who were desirous of composing good French verses against residing in Germany; but the readers of M. Delille's Paradise Lost, composed in London, will never interdict French poets from a visit to England.

M. de Ségur jun. author of fugitive poetry, and some amusing dramatic pieces, will publish, in the course of this month, a work in three volumes intitled, *Des Femmes, de leurs passions, et de leur influence.*

M. De la Harpe promises immediately, the three last volumes of his celebrated *Cours de Litterature, ancienne et moderne,* which will conclude with a *History of the Philosophy of the Eighteenth Century:* he has read extracts in his public lectures, which excite an earnest desire for the entire publication.

The literary production, which makes the

most noise at Paris, is *Delphine*, a novel in six volumes by *Mad. de Stael*. This Lady has hitherto been but little known, except by her political opinions, and some works of the most abstruse speculative philosophy. She has suddenly descended from the lofty regions of metaphysics into the vale of love and sentiment; a territory, from which persons of her sex, and inspired with the unfortunate passion of engrossing the public attention, ought never to stray. Madame de Stael's metaphysical and philosophical notions were regarded as romantic; to make amends, her present romance may be considered as a philosophical production. We cannot yet give an analysis of this work, but we can assure our readers, that nothing can be of a more immoral and dangerous tendency, than the principles it contains. The daughter of M. Necker, author of the essay *Sur l'importance des opinions religieuses*, holds Revelation in contempt, and stands up in defence of natural religion: the daughter of Mad. Necker, author of a work against divorces, makes an elaborate defence of divorce; the friend of humanity preaches suicide; the friend of philosophy seems to applaud the absurd practice of duelling; it is manifest that her only religion, her only worship, is passion, the wildest excess of love.

Love, according to Mad. de Stael, sanctions the greatest sins, breaks asunder the most sacred bonds, and cancels the most solemn engagements. The diction of Madame de Stael is no better than her principles. In establishing pretensions to a glowing style, she has poured forth pages of delirium and phrenzy, and produced whimsical modes of expression, equally repugnant to reason and taste. This book can never be included in the list of those, of which it has been said:

La mere en prescrira la lecture à sa fille.

We have considered it our duty to offer this timely caution to all mothers of families against the the tendency of a work, of which there are already, to our knowledge, two English translations.